**One Million Words in Context**  
  
The "average" young adult novel is between 50,000 to 80,000. (Clearly there are many exceptions, like the later Harry Potter books.) A simple way to determine the word count of a book is to multiply the number of pages by 250 words, assuming that most standard books have approximately 250 words per page. If each student reads 16 250-page books, they will have read approximately 1,000,000 words. Therefore, in general terms, we are asking the students to read four standard-sized books each semester. Of course, we want to encourage pleasure reading of all sorts as well as audio book listening so we have listed some equivalencies. We have tried to keep an open mind, remembering that our goal is simply to increase pleasure reading. While there is no doubt that not all magazines are created equal. *The Economist* is much more substantive than a dirt bike magazine, but we do not want to get into those comparisons. We accept that the numbers below are somewhat arbitrary, but we must acknowledge also that complex rules and formulas do not support our goal of simply encouraging pleasure reading:

**Goal: Read 1,000,000 words for pleasure this year--16 books will do it!**

* **5 magazines=1 book**
* **5 newspapers=1 book**
* **Unabridged audio book=1 book**
* **500-page book=2 books**
* **750-page book=3 books**

**Developmental Milestones for High School Students--Rebekah**  
  
High school students find themselves caught between childhood and adulthood. As they mature throughout the four years of high school, they experience contradictory impulses. Despite their increasing self-esteem, teenagers have a tendency to engage in risk-taking behaviors that can be dangerous to themselves and others. As they search for the “real me” (i.e., an adult identity), there is an increasing integration of varied self perceptions into a more complex sense of self. Teachers modeling reading for pleasure may have an especially strong and lasting impact on students at this point in their development.   
  
Most students in high school should be in the formal operations stage or transitioning from concrete operations into formal operations as defined by Jean Piaget. The formal operations stage is characterized by the ability to apply logical reasoning to abstract ideas as well as concrete objects and situations. Emerging abilities at this stage are essential for advanced reasoning in math and science. Some examples of cognitive development include the following:   
  
· Logical reasoning about abstract, hypothetical, and contrary-to-fact ideas  
· Proportional reasoning  
· Formulation of multiple hypotheses  
· Separation and control of variables  
· Idealism  
  
Notwithstanding that the nature of the 1,000,000,000 Word Campaign is oriented toward promoting pleasure reading, and that some students will settle for material that comfortably falls at or below their reading levels, the encouragement to read 16 books in 1 year will certainly nudge some students to stretch and read material above their level, which will probably fall within their zone of proximal development as defined by Vygotsky.   
  
Ormrod, Jeanne E. 2011. Educational Psychology: Developing Learners, 7th edition. Pearson Education, Inc.: Boston.